



File Code: 1950/5430

Date: January 21, 2014

Dear Interested Public:

The Cook County Land Exchange Environmental Assessment is available for review at [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/superior/projects](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/superior/projects) on the Superior National Forest website.

I am interested in your comments regarding the proposed alternatives and analysis for this project. The decision-making process will be completed after comments on our preliminary work have been received. I believe there is sufficient information in the Environmental Assessment (EA) for you to understand the proposal, its alternatives, and what will happen with this project.

The purpose of the project is to conduct a land exchange with Cook County where the federal government would acquire and consolidate lands within the Boundary Water Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). In exchange, the federal government would convey lands that would allow for sustainable development for Cook County.

The EA describes the project's purpose and need, the alternatives (No-Action and Proposed Action) and environmental effects likely to occur with the implementation of the proposed action. The no action alternative serves as a baseline for comparison with the proposed action.

**How to submit comments:**

We will accept comments for 30 days following the date of publication of the legal notice in the Duluth News Tribune. In order to ensure I have the opportunity to consider your concerns before my decision on the project, it is critical they be raised at this time. This is the final comment period and those who provide specific written comments per 36 CFR 218.2 during this period are eligible to object to the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 218 regulations.

Send written comments to: Brenda Halter, Forest Supervisor, Subject: Cook County Land Exchange, Tofte Ranger District, Superior National Forest, PO Box 2159, Tofte, MN 55615.

- Oral comments must be provided during normal business hours via telephone. Christy Iozzo is the project leader and can be reached at (218) 663-8080.
- Send faxed comments to: Forest Supervisor, Subject: Cook County Land Exchange, (218) 663-8095.
- Send electronic mail comments to: [comments-eastern-superior-tofte@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-eastern-superior-tofte@fs.fed.us), Subject: Cook County Land Exchange. Acceptable formats for electronic comments are: text (.txt), MSWord 6.0 or higher (.doc), portable document format (.pdf), or rich text format (.rtf).



All comments must include: (1) name and address of the individual or organization; (2) Title of the project (Cook County Land Exchange); (3) Specific comments on the proposal, along with supporting reasoning that I should consider in reaching my decision; and (4) signature or other verification of identity on request. I ask that your comments be as specific as possible.

Comments received in response to this letter, including the names and addresses of those who comment, are part of the public record for this action and are available for public inspection.

If you wish to reference scientific literature in your comments, send a copy of the entire reference cited, and include your rationale as to how or why you feel it is pertinent to the Cook County Land Exchange decision. This will allow me to fully evaluate your comments. If I do not receive a copy of the literature, I may not be able to utilize it for my decision.

**What Next:**

All comments received during the 30-day official comment period will be addressed by the interdisciplinary planning team. The team will update the effects analysis and consider other alternatives if necessary. When the analysis is complete, I will issue a draft decision on how to proceed. Once any objections to the draft decision are addressed, I will make a final decision on the project.

Everyone who comments on the EA will be notified, via letter, when the draft decision is made. The Draft Decision Notice will be available at [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/superior/projects](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/superior/projects) on the Forest Service web page. If you would like a CD or paper copy of the Draft Decision Notice, please let us know. If you have any questions on the project, please contact Christy Iozzo at (218) 663-8080.

I appreciate the comments we received on the Cook County Land Exchange Scoping Report. The EA incorporates and addresses many of the concerns raised. Thank you for your interest in the Superior National Forest and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Brenda Halter*  
BRENDA HALTER  
Forest Supervisor

cc: Nancy S Larson  
Kurt Steele